Eckhart Tolle - Hyperactive mind and Acquiring things

[Speaker 2] (0:06 - 1:08)

Just one comment for the benefit of everybody is that in the Indian custom today is the day of the full moon and on that day consciousness is enlivened the most and a lot of knowledge and energy and bliss comes from the guru so you're our guru today so we want to thank you for sharing that enlivened consciousness with us. So that's one comment and I had one question and that is that in order to maintain the unity and the diversity all the time would it be advisable to cut down activity and make your life a lot more simple with less belongings because according to Nisargadatta one of the things he comments is that you should give up pretty much everything in life and maintain as little as possible and your sole purpose in life should be just enlivenment of your own self and consciousness.

[Speaker 1] (1:09 - 13:00)

Thank you. Of course it's true that many people have many superfluous things they are not only concerned with innumerable things that are ultimately superfluous they also try to accumulate more and more things that are ultimately superfluous but the liberation does not lie in whether or not you have things but it's more important what is your inner relationship to what you have talking for a moment about things that you possess or acquire. Another aspect of your question of course is things that you do, activities that you are engaged in.

We have the two aspects as far as activities are concerned. Many people in our civilization are hyperactive, they are continuously active, they are stressed almost continuously, they are pursuing one thing after another and they never arrive, there is always the next thing to do and the next thing and then they hurry with everything. That's the stress disease of our civilization and that's a form of madness that has to be relinquished because it's an insane way to live.

Now people might say well I'm going to lose my job if I'm not stressed or if I don't do what I'm supposed to do and I cannot do what I'm supposed to do without stress because there's always deadlines, one deadline after another. Another aspect of living in our civilization is that you get continuous deadlines for obscure reasons. Publishers say the book has to be out by such-and-such a date.

Why does it have to be out by such-and-such a date? Can't you wait until the book is mature and complete? No, no, we have all the things, I don't know what the justifications are but they always say it has to be out and you need to hurry.

It's insane and so many things that our civilization produces are rushed, rushed jobs one could say, very rushed, they're not fully matured. Decisions are taken before they even

know fully whether the all the facts that involve the decision. On TV executives they put on a show and then they look at the what are the audience numbers and if it's not kind of, no, take it off, take it off.

If they'd given it a chance it might have developed into something great. Or employees, companies not doing well, okay, we have to sack a thousand people, do it now. But no, there's no, no spaciousness at all, there's only rushed decision-making, all insane.

So to bring, not to be part of that is essential, your state of consciousness, you need to, it's not easy living in this world, to say I'm not going to live in this way, I will do what is required of me but I won't be part of the madness. I'll do what I can, I'll do it as well as I can, but I'm not going to live the rest of my life in a state of stress. You just give attention to whatever it is you're doing now and see if you can do it well, not looking to the fruit of the action, do it now.

Reducing unnecessary activities, but more important than that is reducing the unnecessary mind activity, because really that's where the whole thing originates. Because the mind is becoming more and more active, what is being projected is external activity. So a hyperactive mind produces a hyperactive life.

What's the next thought? What's the next thing really? What's the next thought about what I have to do?

And the next thought, so you're rushing after one thought after another, trying to capture this and this and this. So it goes back to the mind. So it needs to be tackled on the inner level primarily rather than the outer.

If you do not come to grips with or bring awareness to your hyperactive mind, there isn't that much you can do on the outer level, because you will continuously be driven by the hyperactive mind into all kinds of activities, many of them quite useless. Even useless, even people who have jobs, they're still doing many things that are quite unnecessary, superfluous, just hyperactive, can't stop doing, have to stop doing, inability to just be. So reducing the hyperactive mind, slowing that down is of the essence, that's the most important part of it.

And then that will then manifest in your active life, so that the hyperactivity will not be there. You will be actually more effective in what you do, but you'll do fewer things, but you'll do them better than countless things half done, because there's not enough time to really do it well. Of course that's all mind, and that's the dilemma our whole civilization is in, that dysfunctional state.

So to take yourself out of the dysfunctional state, so to speak, not physically, but internally, is not easy, it's a challenge, because you're surrounded by a certain state of consciousness, the collective consciousness that you move in. So it's your job to be

awake enough so that you don't get drawn into that state of consciousness, which really should be called state of unconsciousness, the collective, so that some sanity comes into this world through you. And so that's the reduction of activity, begins with the reduction of thought in your hyperactive mind, and then automatically then that will flow into reduction of activity.

Now we come to the second part, that's to do with things, or acquiring things, as some people recommend, you should get rid of as many things as possible in your life. Now I'm speaking as somebody who has relatively few things, although I have more things now than I ever had before in my life, and that's strange, because usually it goes the other way, when as you get older you gradually let go, but life has been so strange that now I have more material possessions, although not vast amount, but more than before. I don't feel particularly attached to any one thing, in other words, if it disappeared it would be okay, that's fine.

So it's not, and I believe not everybody, it's not for everybody to let go of things on the physical level, it's not even necessary. You need to examine what your inner relationship to the things that surround you is, whether there is an identification with possessions, or whether you simply appreciate something beautiful that is in your life, without the attachment to it, or it giving you an enhanced sense of self, as it often is the case. And you need to see whether you are, whether there's some kind of acquisitive tendency in you that propels you to buy or acquire more and more and more, or whether you are simply just happy with what is already there, and simply appreciate what's there, or do you compulsively go to the shopping malls every weekend and look for something to buy to fill up this emptiness you feel inside.

And just the action of buying something confirms that you are somebody to the ego. It feels there's nothing wrong with buying, you can buy something beautiful, but not as an addictive thing, as a compulsive thing. So it's finding a right relationship with the external world, not an addictive relationship, but a free relationship.

The appreciation of nice things is not something that is non-spiritual, it's actually spiritual to appreciate nice things. Whether you call the nice things mine, or whether it's not yours, for me sometimes it's enough, well not anymore. When I lived in London, I would sometimes walk around the streets and look in shop windows, in Regent Street or Bond Street, and look at the nice things in the window and say, wow, that's beautiful.

I neither had the money nor the desire to buy these things, but I loved it. Now if I had had the money, I might have bought an occasional thing. It would be nice to have that at home and look at it and feel its presence, perhaps it was made with attention and care.

Why not appreciate beautiful things? The attachment is what keeps you unconscious. So I happen to know your home and I know that you are surrounded by beautiful things, and I also believe that although you are surrounded by beautiful things, you don't have an

enormous attachment to those things.

I can sense that there's a certain spaciousness there between you and that. There's a simple appreciation of it, and that is fine. Now if the time comes in your life where you feel from within the urge comes to leave even that behind, although you may not be attached, but at some point in your life it is possible that you may feel, now I want to live in totally simple surroundings.

I just want to not have things anymore at all. If it comes, that's fine, and then you will take action. You might remove yourself or you might give away all the beautiful things that fill up your house and just be in the empty, relatively empty space.

Who knows? If that comes to you at some point, that's fine too, but primarily really is what your inner relationship is to the outer.